

Interagency Cooperation With Other Agencies And Entities

The Division Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) has an excellent working relationship with the Workforce Investment System in South Dakota. The cooperation between agencies is done through formal written agreements and informal arrangements. South Dakota has chosen not to do an early implementation as an option in the Work Force Investment Act for Unified State Plans with the Department of Labor by July 1, 1999. The Division of SBVI will be an official partner in the Unified State Plan to be implemented on July 1st, 2000.

Formal Agreement for Access to the Unsanitized Job Service Listings

In January of 1997, a Cooperative Agreement was developed between the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Labor (DOL). The purpose of this agreement was to develop arrangements for staff from the Department of Human Services to have access to the Job Service Listings in DOL's computer system. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors benefit from having access to this information in assisting consumers to obtain employment. Having access to this system helps identify employment openings close to the consumer's home and employers who have historically been more open to hiring individuals with disabilities.

Formal Agreement for Information Follow-up Project

For the past three years, SBVI has been participating in the Department of Labor's Information Follow-up Project. This project combines electronic data from the Department of Human Services, Department of Labor, Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, Technical Institutes, Board of Regents, Public Universities, Department of Corrections, Department of Social Services, and the Department of Commerce and Regulations. This project provides information on the number of consumers involved with other agencies. This program is also able to provide a summary report on individuals who were rehabilitated in previous years by the Vocational Rehabilitation program.

Formal Memorandum of Understanding with Statewide Workforce Investment

The Department of Human Services is currently working with the Department of Labor in developing a new Memorandum of Understanding. South Dakota is considered as a "Single State Local Area" in the Workforce Development Act. There will be one statewide Memorandum of Understanding with the State Workforce Development Council. The Memorandum of Understanding with the Workforce Development Council will encompass all local areas. It is anticipated that this agreement will be completed by February of 2000. This agreement will address:

- Agency Financial Responsibility;
- Conditions, Terms, and procedures of Reimbursement;
- Coordination of Services Procedures;
- Cost Allocation Plan; and
- Referral Procedures;
- The duration of the memorandum outlines procedures for amending the memorandum and procedures for interagency disputes.

Participation in Councils

The State of South Dakota has selected the option to continue with the current council composition. This option to continue with the current composition is allowed in the WIA for councils that were in place on December 31st, 1997. The Workforce Development Council currently has a member from the Department of Human Services and Vocational Rehabilitation. The State Rehabilitation Council for the Division of SBVI will be filling one of its new positions with a representative from the Workforce Development Council. Recommendations have been made to the Governor for appointment.

One Stop Centers

The South Dakota Department of Labor certifies local One-Stop Centers in South Dakota. It is planned that 18 One-Stop Centers will exist by 12/31/1999. Each local One-Stop Center has a local council established. The public Vocational Rehabilitation program is represented on each of these local councils. The Department of Human Services has Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors in ten communities throughout the state. In seven of these communities, the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are co-located with the Department of Labor. Co-location of the remaining three offices has not yet occurred as a result of the availability of office space. In offices where agencies are co-located, our agencies share computer systems, office machines, and equipment. Collaboration of services between agencies is continually occurring at these office locations.

4.9 (c)(1) Interagency cooperation with, and utilization of the services and facilities of the Federal, State, and local agencies and programs, including programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture and State use contracting programs, to the extent that such agencies and programs are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system

The State VR Agencies do not have any agreements under the Secretary for Rural Development of the US Department of Agricultural. DRS and SBVI have the following formal cooperative agreements with agencies who do not carry out activities through the statewide workforce investment system.

Project Skills

Both Divisions, DRS and SBVI fund cooperative agreements with local school districts in South Dakota. This program provides paid work experiences in student's career areas to help them prepare for adulthood and the world of work.

Transition Project for SBVI consumers

The Division of SBVI has a cooperative agreement in place with the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired for provision of transition services to students who are blind on a statewide basis. This agreement supports a transition specialist who is trained in the skills of blindness. The purpose of the position is to educate blind or visually impaired students, their parents and to work with SBVI rehabilitation counselors in the delivery of transition services.

State Use Law

The State of South Dakota does have a “State Use Law” as described in South Dakota Codified Law §5-20-4. The Department of Human Services has prepared a list of products and custodial/maintenance services offered by qualified agencies. The Department updated this list and furnished a copy to the Bureau of Administration on September 2nd, 1998.

Client Assistance Program Recommendations

The South Dakota Client Assistance Program (CAP) has presented a recommendation to SBVI that interagency cooperative agreements be more specific in terms of cooperating activities. The recommendation also requests that more input be sought when developing the agreements. CAP specifically requests that the following three agreements be revisited: Cooperative agreement with education, determination of how the division will work with TANF recipients, and the cooperative agreements with the Native American 121 Projects. The Division of SBVI will address each of the suggestions as these agreements are renewed or developed.